

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Drew Crockett
(202) 225-5074

Davis: FEMA Should Improve IT Systems

Washington, D.C. – Government Reform Committee Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) issued the following statement upon today's release of the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General report, "Emergency Preparedness and Response Could Better Integrate Information Technology with Incident Response and Recovery" (OIG-05-36):

"Today's report found that while the Emergency Preparedness and Response (EP&R) Directorate – the parent entity of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – and its approach to information technology (IT) met the challenges of the 2004 hurricane season, a number of IT management issues limited EP&R's effectiveness. The lack of integration between EP&R systems hindered information exchange during response and recovery operations. During Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne, FEMA's IT capabilities were pushed to the limit; systems had trouble managing the increased workloads and lacked real-time reporting capabilities.

"The Directorate needs to further integrate systems and update its enterprise architecture to maximize technological abilities during times of emergencies. The report found that many of these problems were due to, 'FEMA's focus on short-term IT fixes rather than long-term solutions.' This is a problem we see on a government-wide basis and one that the Government Reform Committee will continue to monitor. Given that this IG report was written before Hurricane Katrina, the Select Committee, which I also chair, will review the extent to which these IT problems could also have affected FEMA's response to Katrina."

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